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ABSTRACT

The martial art of Aikido was used as an intervention with 15 middle and high school students with severe emotional disturbances in an alternative educational setting. Students with an extensive history of violently disruptive and assaultive behaviors were trained for 12 weeks in this nonviolent Japanese martial art in order to achieve the following outcomes: reduce disruptive classroom behaviors and verbally abusive and physically assaultive behaviors toward other students and staff members, and decrease the number of school-wide disciplinary referrals for violent behaviors. The training focused on peaceful conflict resolution, nonviolent self-defense, individual and group confrontation management, and autogenic relaxation training. Significant improvements were achieved in reducing violent behaviors during the training sessions, and these positive behaviors transferred into other classrooms. Parents and administrators also noted positive behaviors exhibited by student participants, including enhanced respect for authority and peers, improved conflict de-escalation skills, and enhanced feelings of confidence and self-worth. It was found that Aikido training can be implemented with a minimum of scheduling disruptions and financial expenditure. Appended is a 12-week behavioral summary chart. (Contains 46 references.) (SW)

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The Implementation of a Video-Enhanced Aikido-Based School Violence Prevention Training Program to Reduce Disruptive and Assaultive Behaviors Among Severely Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents

by

Andrew J. Edelman

Cluster 60

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Marlene A. Tarr

Marlene A. Tarr

Principal

Title

Frederick, Maryland

Address

August 2, 1994

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Andrew J. Edelman under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

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Date of Final Approval of Report

G. Lowen mc

Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

The Implementation of a Video-Enhanced Aikido-Based School Violence Prevention Training Program to Reduce Disruptive and Assaultive Behaviors Among Severely Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents. Edelman, Andrew J., 1994: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Conflict Resolution / Behavior Management/ Discipline / Peace Education / Cooperative Learning / Non-Violence / Peer Cooperation / Physical Education / Stress Management / Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder / Alternative Education / Martial Arts / Aikido / Relaxation Training / School Violence Prevention / Videotape / Educational Technology / Special Education / Emotionally Disturbed / School Safety / Middle School / High School / Crisis Intervention / School Security / Behavior Modification / Anger Control / Counseling.

This practicum was designed to help severely emotionally disturbed middle and high school students within an alternative educational setting more effectively manage their own disruptive and assaultive behaviors by teaching them a variety of verbal and physical conflict management strategies through the instruction of the traditional, non-violent Japanese martial art of Aikido. These students had an extensive history of violently disruptive and assaultive behaviors within their schools and communities and were classified as seriously emotionally handicapped.

The specific objectives of this practicum were to: (1) reduce disruptive classroom behaviors; (2) reduce verbally abusive behaviors towards other students and staff members; (3) reduce physically assaultive behaviors towards other students and staff members; and (4) decrease the number of school-wide disciplinary referrals for violent behavior during the implementation period.

An analysis of the results showed that Aikido training can be safely and successfully implemented in an alternative education setting with a minimum of scheduling disruptions and financial expenditure. All practicum outcomes were met. Students and staff members noted significant improvements in reduction of violent behaviors during the Aikido training sessions and a transfer of these positive behaviors into other classrooms within the school. Parents and administrators additionally noted a variety of positive behaviors exhibited by the student participants including enhanced respect for authority and peers, improved conflict de-escalation skills, and enhanced feelings of confidence and self-worth. The findings suggest that Aikido training is beneficial to adolescents and can be implemented in a variety of educational and therapeutic settings.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community, a large suburban town with a population of 85,000 people, is characterized by socio-cultural and economic diversity as a result of servicing a large military installation as well as its close proximity to major metropolitan urban centers. There exists a large multi-cultural middle-class economic base within the town along with a substantial upper-middle class population in adjoining rural municipalities. The town is undergoing rapid changes as more and more people are moving here from the large cities to escape the high cost of housing and growing crime rate. Unfortunately, some of the urban problems are now coming to the town, such as overcrowding and drug-related crime, causing concern among long-time residents of the community. The town's major attractions include picturesque farmland, historical landmarks, scenic mountains and state parks, and a large military installation. In short, the town can be characterized as a suburban, semi-rural bedroom community a short drive away from the big city.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

With nearly two decades of nationwide violence prevention training and consulting experience within high-risk corporate, therapeutic, and educational settings, the writer is presently serving as a behavioral disorders specialist and special educator employed by a suburban county public school system serving a regional population of 350,000. The writer's work setting is an alternative day school for approximately 150 severely emotionally disturbed students in grades six through twelve who have been expelled from their regular schools for a variety of offenses, including assault and battery against students and/or staff members, possession or brandishing of a deadly weapon on school property, truancy, or drug and alcohol policy violations. These expelled students may choose to remain out of school and forfeit their opportunity to finish their educational requirements for graduation, or attend the aforementioned alternative education site, working towards the successful completion of course work necessary for graduation or transition back to their regular school.

The vast majority of students at the work site have an extensive history of disruptive and assaultive behaviors. Thus, the work site operates on a positive reinforcement behavior management system of points and levels. Students who are successful move through six levels and, upon successful transition, are mainstreamed back into their home

schools. However, those students who are unable to (or choose not to) move through all six levels must remain enrolled at the site for the duration of their education. For those students who continue to exhibit dangerously disruptive or assaultive behaviors while attending the facility despite exhaustive attempts at remediation and behavior modification, county educational administrators have the option to place these students in a residential, psychiatric, or correctional setting.

At present, the writer works among a staff of thirty administrative, instructional, and therapeutic professionals, pursuing the challenging mission of modifying and correcting violent disruptive and/or assaultive behaviors. Additionally, the writer is responsible for implementation of mathematics, language arts, and independent living instructional curricula as well as providing crisis intervention, behavior modification, and special education case management services.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

There had been an increase in violent behavior among the severely emotionally disturbed middle and high school students at the work setting. In the last five years, the work setting had faced a dramatic rise in disruptive and assaultive student behaviors towards other students and staff members. Whereas such behaviors in the past would have been seen only in residential, psychiatric, or correctional settings, these behaviors had now become the norm in less restrictive environments. Fighting, weapons possession, and verbal abuse were now occurring on a daily basis, posing a danger to the entire school community. As a result, staff had to focus their efforts on policing the building instead of providing the students with a meaningful educational experience.

Previously, a variety of modifications had been made in an attempt to solve the problem. A sophisticated intercom system, complete with cameras, voice recorders, and telephones in each classroom, was installed several years

ago in an effort to improve the general security of the physical plant and the classroom environment, and to assist in documenting evidence of violent behavior. In addition, numerous in-service training courses were instituted to teach staff members to more effectively deal with verbally abusive behaviors. Unfortunately, these efforts had done little to reduce incidents of disruptive or violent behavior.

More recent attempts by administrators to reduce the population of students with extreme volatility and explosive behaviors had been met with new mandates for inclusion of even greater numbers of some of the most dangerous students in the state.

Consequently, this rise in disruptive and assaultive school behaviors among severely emotionally disturbed middle and high school students posed considerable physical and psychological risks to the entire school community.

Problem Documentation

Evidence gathered from documented written referrals from September 1991 to September 1993 demonstrated an increase in a variety of violent in-school behaviors. In terms of assaultive behaviors, student assaults against staff members (pushing, kicking, striking or grabbing) had risen from 11 in 1991-1992 to 17 in 1992-1993, an increase of 54.5 percent. Student assaults against other students had risen from 144 in 1991-1992 to 151 in 1992-1993, an

increase of 4.9 percent. During this same time period, student fighting incidents (two or more students engaged in combat with each other) had risen from 96 in 1991-1992 to 110 in 1992-1993, an increase of 14.6 percent.

In terms of disruptive behaviors, the documented evidence revealed the same unfortunate trend. Annual incidents of verbal abuse, racial/cultural discrimination, and/or victimization by students towards other students and staff members had risen from 41 in 1991-1992 to 86 in 1992-1993, an increase of 109.8 percent. Annual incidents of classroom disruptions (verbal outbursts or physical movements that are not assaultive but severely impact on the instructional climate) and disorderly conduct (throwing chairs or other property as well as extreme defiance when asked by staff/police to comply with instructions) had risen from 2,497 in 1991-1992 to 3,114 in 1992-1993, an increase of 24.7 percent. In summary, the number of referrals written by staff members for disruptive or assaultive student behavior had risen from an average of 13.8 per day and 69 per week in 1991-1992 to 17.3 per day and 86.5 per week in 1992-1993.

Causative Analysis

There were a variety of socio-economic and organizational factors that contributed to the increased incidence of violent in-school behaviors at the work setting. One of the most significant factors impacting on

school violence at the work site was the increasing presence of dysfunctional family units who were unable to provide adequate child-rearing behavioral guidance and in-home structure to the students. Although the work setting itself was an extremely well-managed facility with dedicated and caring staff members, most of the students upon leaving the site at the end of the day went home to a chaotic, stressful living environment that lacked consistency and positive interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately, nearly all of the students had been victims of on-going verbal, physical, and/or sexual abuse by one or more family members. In addition, school psychologists and clinical social workers reported numerous incidents of parental substance abuse which contributed to the already existing climate of dysfunction. Consequently, students modeled their parents' lack of discipline and in-home violence and brought these same behaviors with them to school.

In addition, a variety of media sources presented violent behavior as an acceptable approach to problem-solving and conflict resolution. Unfortunately, the students at the work setting who were diagnosed with a variety of behavioral, conduct, and psychiatric disorders glorified the graphic examples of brutality and violence in movies and music videos, and often transferred these behaviors to their daily interactions with others. In fact, many students stated to therapeutic staff members that they

voluntarily bombarded themselves with violent audio-visual imagery and stimuli four to six hours daily and enjoyed imitating violent behaviors from such media. As a result, school officials had to constantly face the difficult task of teaching non-violence to a student body that was actually more familiar and comfortable with brutality.

Another factor that contributed to an increase in school violence was the continuation of budgetary cutbacks and restrictions. Economic conditions within the state and local government had forced all county educational sites to do much more with far less. For example, budgetary cutbacks on residential placement facilities for severely emotionally disturbed students resulted in a backlog of appropriate placements for special education students at all service levels. This forced the work setting to deal with dangerously volatile and assaultive students who, in a climate of greater economic abundance, would have been placed in a more restrictive psychiatric or correctional setting. In addition, since less money was allotted to each school in the service community, class sizes grew larger and the availability of necessary instructional personnel and material became more scarce, making already challenging students nearly impossible to instruct and manage in an effective manner.

Additionally, educators at the work setting were ill-trained to handle the dramatic escalation of violent student

confrontations. Although the staff had gone through a training program to manage escalations of verbal and physical violence, this training had been received in a static, passive manner by watching videotapes and practicing the concepts (with cooperative peers) for less than thirty minutes. Unfortunately, teachers were facing student behaviors at an intensity level equivalent to that faced by law enforcement officers, all without a badge, nightstick, or firearm. In fact, the site had to call for police assistance at least three to four times per week to assist in the management and restraint of violent students. However, many teachers at the site who wanted to learn more effective ways of handling conflict were discouraged from participating in a more intensive crisis management training program for fear of potential lawsuits or costly personal injury claims.

Moreover, recent legal interpretations of local, state, and federal special education legislation had dramatically reduced the power of educational professionals at the work site to discipline, suspend, or expel severely emotionally disturbed students. Locally, the community school district had to comply with inclusion mandates, which required that greater numbers of severely handicapped students be mainstreamed into regular schools. In addition, it was commonplace for teachers to be challenged by students, parents, administrators, and community officials on every

imaginable school-related issue. Sadly, county administrators frequently buckled under to outspoken parents who threatened to "go public" if a grade was not raised or another chance was not given. In short, educational professionals at the work site had lost a great deal of authority and control they once had only a decade earlier, setting an extremely poor example for students to imitate.

Finally, substance abuse by the students at the work site contributed to an increase in erratic, unpredictable, and volatile behaviors. Many of the students had violated drug and alcohol policy guidelines in the community prior to acceptance at the site. In fact, a growing number of students were bringing controlled substances into the building for use or sale. When these students who were already extremely unstable began to self-medicate with illegal drugs, the climate of the entire school community became increasingly hazardous. Recently, students and staff witnessed a violent assault against a staff member and several police officers by a student who reportedly had earlier smoked crack cocaine after taking his regularly prescribed anti-psychotic medication.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

In examining what other professionals had written about the problem, there was extensive literature written about school violence under a variety of topics, and in a wide variety of publications. Books, professional journals,

newspapers, magazines and dissertations provided evidence and documentation that increased violence among secondary school students was one of the most pressing issues facing educational and therapeutic professionals in the past decade, and was continuing to rise steadily in school settings nationwide.

Glazer (1992) and Baron (1993) pointed out that educational settings, once considered safe havens for all members of the community, had experienced a dramatic increase in crime and violence within the last ten years. Toch & Silver (1993) cited that, according to FBI statistics, juvenile arrests for violent crimes had increased by 50 percent between 1988 and 1992, and that many of these crimes took place in and around school settings, perpetrated against both students and staff members. In fact, Simpson (1993) argued that the field of education was becoming more and more dangerous each year, citing National Education Association figures that revealed an alarming trend. As of February 1993, an average of 5,000 secondary school teachers were physically assaulted and another 100,000 were physically threatened <u>each month</u> in U.S. public schools.

Consequently, school violence had become among the most serious problems faced by administrators who were now forced to replace the priority of education with the priority of managing disruptive and assaultive behavior. Harrington-

Lueker (1992) stated that the number of gun-related student injuries and deaths while at school was on the rise and posed the newest and deadliest threat to the school community. Heen, Stone, Singler, & Ravitz (1993) pointed out that since school violence was now affecting school systems throughout the nation, educational professionals were burdened with the new roles of police officer, security guard, and crisis intervention specialist.

Clearly school violence has been a timely and serious problem. An in-depth review of the literature revealed a variety of diverse and challenging variables that contributed to the increased incidence and severity of school related violence under a variety of topic headings. These headings included: special education, psychiatry, psychology, medicine, nursing, security and law enforcement, clinical social work, sociology, urban planning, conflict resolution, confrontation management, neurolinguistic programming, educational administration, martial arts, and physical fitness training.

One of the most significant factors cited as contributing to school violence was the growth of the dysfunctional family unit (Silvern & Kaersvang, 1989). In fact, exposure to family violence was cited as the most significant predictor of future violent behavior (Agnew & Huguley, 1989). Additionally, post-traumatic stress disorder stemming from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse

was cited as one of the primary causes of explosive, unprovoked behavior, often directly related to the dysfunctional household environment (Ochberg, 1988).

Organic neurological and chemical imbalance disorders were also cited as among the major factors that contribute to violent adolescent behavior (Curtis, 1985; Krakowski, Convit, & Volavka, 1988).

In addition, the literature cited the growing incidence of adolescent substance abuse as a contributing factor in the dramatic rise in school-related violence. Such substances ranged from alcohol and marijuana to crack cocaine, anabolic steroids, and toxic inhalants. These substances contributed to a variety of disruptive and assaultive behaviors and, in some instances, a dramatic increase in the physical strength of the substance abuser (Lubell, 1989; Pernanen, 1991; O'Neil, 1991).

Moreover, the mass media's promotion and glorification of violence was cited in the literature as having a negative impact on the behaviors of adolescents (Carlsson-Paige, N. & Levin, D.E., 1992). Rapid socio-economic and technological changes in all aspects of community life, including population growth, economic pressure, and socio-cultural conflicts, had also contributed to increases in school violence (Manacker, 1990; Ingrassia, 1993; Adler, 1994).

Finally, the literature cited a number of changes in educational organizations that created a climate of

increased school-related violence, including the new role of school systems as family care providers (Landen, 1992), reduction in financial resources available to school systems (Hranitz & Eddowes, 1990), and recent judicial interpretation of exceptional education legislation which reduced the authority of school officials to exclude violent students from the general school population (Osborne, 1988).

In short, each of these citations in the literature demonstrated that the increase in school violence had a variety of causes and posed a significant threat to many members of society. Unfortunately, each of these cited causal factors were also evident within the writer's work setting, continuing to contribute to the increasing incidence of disruptive and assaultive in-school behaviors among severely emotionally disturbed middle and high school students.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The purpose of this practicum was to reduce incidents of violent and disruptive behavior among severely emotionally disturbed middle and high school students at the work site. The targeted group of students were the members of the site's therapeutic Anger Control Counseling Group (supervised and coordinated by a staff of licensed clinical social workers and psychologists) which served the fifteen students in the school with the greatest need for structured behavior management therapy.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum: (1) An average of 11 of 15 students will refrain from disruptive classroom behavior during the twelve-week activity sessions; (2) an average of 12 of 15 students will refrain from verbally abusive behavior towards students or staff during the twelve-week activity sessions; (3) an average of 13 of 15 students will refrain from physically assaultive behavior towards students or staff during the

twelve-week activity sessions; and (4) 8 of 15 students will exhibit a reduction in school-wide disciplinary referrals for violent behavior at the completion of the 12-week program.

Measurement of Outcomes

In order to accurately measure the change and standard of this program, the writer would employ a videotaped analysis of student behaviors during each activity session. Closed-circuit television cameras with recording systems were to be present in each classroom and activity area, and since students, parents, and staff members were to be required to give written consent to be videotaped as a condition of enrollment or employment, activity areas and classrooms would be able to be recorded at any time without notifying students or staff members. This unique recording environment would help to prevent unwanted influences on student behaviors during the program's activity session.

After each program session was recorded on film, the videotape was to be reviewed and analyzed for evidence of disruptive and/or assaultive behaviors. During this analysis, the writer would use a weekly behavioral tally sheet as a measurement tool to record and tabulate the number of disruptive and assaultive behaviors by category, using a code for each measured behavior. For example, two tally marks for a student under the heading CD would indicate that the particular student exhibited two disruptive

classroom behaviors, while no tally marks under the heading VAS would indicate that the particular student exhibited no verbally abusive behaviors towards students.

In addition, the number and frequency of disciplinary referrals written for violent behavior for each participant during the remainder of the school day once the activity session had been completed was also to be tallied to determine the program's ability to influence behavior outside of the activity setting.

In conclusion, the writer's criteria for success upon completion of the 12-week program implementation period included that (1) an average of 11 out of 15 students refrain from disruptive classroom behavior during each activity session; (2) an average of 12 out of 15 students refrain from verbally abusive behavior towards students or staff members during each activity session; (3) an average of 13 out of 15 students refrain from physically assaultive behavior towards students or staff members during each activity session; and (4) 8 out of 15 of participating students exhibit a reduction in school-wide referrals for violent behavior.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

There had been an increase in violent behavior among the severely emotionally disturbed middle and high school students at the writer's work setting. In fact, educational settings nationwide reflected this same pattern of school violence escalation. As a result, educational and therapeutic professionals had attempted a variety of solutions to stem the rising tide of school violence. An extensive review of the literature had revealed eleven major solution strategies that had met with success in reducing violent behaviors among severely emotionally disturbed adolescents in a variety of settings. However, each strategy had its own strengths and weaknesses and, consequently, not all solutions were feasible or appropriate for the writer's work setting.

The first solution indicated by the literature search involved the use of videotape technology by teachers and therapists to model and record appropriate social problem solving skills within classroom settings. Reganick (1991) noted significant reductions in violent behaviors at a

residential treatment center through the use of this strategy. In addition, Diffily & Fleege (1993) found this technology to be helpful as a tool for educators to measure all aspects of a student's communicative, cognitive, and behavioral strengths and weaknesses.

The second solution involved the clinical diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to help reduce violent behavior among individuals who themselves had been victims of physical or psychological trauma in childhood. Ochberg (1988) and Silvern & Kaersvang (1989) each cited the prevalence of PTSD among many individuals who exhibit violent behaviors, and therefore recommended treatment of PTSD as a valuable component in the behavioral treatment process.

The third solution cited in the literature, self-recorded behavior modification treatment, had demonstrated a positive effect in reducing disruptive classroom behaviors. James (1990) pointed out that students who monitored their own class conduct were able to successfully reduce verbal outbursts and other disruptive classroom behaviors.

Conflict resolution training, the fourth solution cited by the literature, had been shown to reduce incidents of bully-victim violence (Kikkawa, 1987) and aggressive student behaviors towards peers and staff members (Glenn, 1990; Johnson, 1992; Malm, 1992). According to these studies,

conflict resolution training had been particularly effective when aggressors and victims participated in the training at the same time and were led by respected staff members.

The fifth solution cited by the literature focused upon non-violent traditional martial arts training, which had been shown to reduce violent behavior and improve cooperation skills in aggressive individuals. Tart (1987) and Fuller (1988) cited numerous physical and psychological benefits of martial arts training, including improved anger control response and positive self-concept among participants. Nosanchuk (1989) found that traditional styles of martial arts that employed a philosophy and techniques that emphasized non-violence (such as Judo and Aikido) were more effective in reducing aggressive behavior than modern styles of Karate which emphasized aggressive and often extremely brutal self-defense techniques. Moreover, Madenlian (1979), Saposnek (1980), and Heckler (1985) argued that Aikido training had a dramatic effect on reducing aggressive behavior among participants in a variety of instructional and therapeutic settings worldwide.

Non-violent crisis intervention, the sixth cited solution, had been shown to be an effective behavior management tool for de-escalating violent confrontation in therapeutic residential and hospital settings (Federn, 1989; Cahil & Stuart, 1991; Tardiff, 1992). In addition, the non-violent verbal and physical techniques employed in this

strategy had been shown to be extremely effective in calming agitated or out of control students within educational settings (Burke, 1992; Moriarty, 1992).

The seventh cited solution involved the implementation of early family intervention and treatment of in-home violence. Woodward (1992) found that increasing parental involvement in the moral and ethical education of young children helped to decrease pre-adolescent acts of violence.

The eighth solution cited by the literature discussed a revision in the local, state, and federal special education laws. According to Osborne (1988), a revised legal interpretation of special education legislation would help to strengthen the authority of school systems in preventing school violence.

The ninth solution noted by professionals in the field involved the implementation of improved physical plant and building security measures, including metal detectors, cameras, and communications systems to reduce school violence. However, Harrington-Lueker (1992) and Kongshem (1992) pointed out that such solutions had only been effective when combined with a well-planned school safety program and well-trained personnel.

Physical fitness activities, the tenth solution cited in the literature, had been shown to reduce the severity and incidence of disruptive behaviors, particularly in special education settings. McGimsey & Favell (1988) found

that strenuous physical exercise helped to reduce disruptive behaviors in severely aggressive hyperactive mentally retarded individuals.

Finally, the eleventh solution cited by professionals in the field discussed the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation training. Meditation, deep breathing, and visualization training were shown to be effective in reducing levels of stress and violence among secondary special education students (Nenortas, 1986; Seitz, 1990).

Description of Selected Solution

After reviewing the literature, it was clear that solutions to the problem of managing violent in-school behavior needed to be generated on a multi-disciplinary level since the problem of violence was made up of a myriad of causal variables. Thus, the practicum focused on the implementation of a combination of non-violent, non-invasive and cost-effective strategies which were based on both the writer's own experiences as well as the findings reported in the literature citations.

The selected solution was a video-enhanced Aikido-based school violence prevention training program that employed the effective strategies of non-violent martial arts training, conflict resolution, physical fitness activities and autogenic relaxation, all integral components of traditional Aikido instruction. This program was designed to help students in the Anger Control Counseling Group more

effectively manage their own violent or disruptive behaviors by teaching them a variety of verbal and physical conflict management coping strategies through the defensive, non-violent Japanese martial art of Aikido. Practitioners of Aikido, translated from Japanese as "the Art of Peace" or "the Way of Harmony" (Heckler, 1985), are taught to control physical escalations of violence in the least violent manner possible. Although other forms of martial arts, such as Karate, Kung Fu, and Tae Kwon Do, have been shown to improve self-confidence and physical fitness levels, research by Trulson (1986) and Nosanchuk (1989) suggests that such offensively-oriented arts actually increase levels of aggression and arousal. Since the writer had targeted students with an extreme degree of aggressiveness and explosive behavior, it was the writer's opinion that the non-violent martial art of Aikido would be the most logical model to use at the work site.

As an Aikido practitioner and self-defense instructor pursuing a 1st Degree Black Belt, the writer had observed numerous positive physical and psychological benefits among practitioners, including enhanced levels of cooperation, anger control, empathy for others, respect for authority and peers, relaxation, self-confidence in the face of verbal and physical confrontation, as well as muscular and cardiovascular strength and endurance. During the summer of 1993, the writer taught a series of Aikido-based conflict

resolution and confrontation management seminars for educational and therapeutic professionals in a variety of locations nationwide. At the conclusion of each seminar, the writer saw a marked improvement in the participants' ability to handle stressful confrontation scenarios, ranging from verbal escalation by a single individual to an armed assault by multiple attackers with weapons. In fact, many of these participants suggested that Aikido training might be effective in helping students of all ages control their own disruptive or violent behaviors in a variety of settings.

In addition, Aikido training required very little expenditure of economic resources (several folding attachable wrestling mats, colored martial arts belts, and comfortable clothing) and would therefore be extremely cost-effective to implement at the work site, especially since the wrestling mats were already present at the facility. Moreover, the writer's clinical and administrative supervisors had expressed a willingness to allow an immediate implementation of this program due to its demonstrated effectiveness in other settings, its non-violent philosophy, and the lack of effectiveness of other school-based behavior modification approaches presently in place at the work site.

The violence prevention training program was designed to take place on the wrestling mats in order to

simulate the instructional environment of a traditional Japanese dojo (martial arts training hall) to encourage and stimulate the already high level of student interest in martial arts films and activities. The program supplemented traditional Aikido training with a variety of conflict resolution and anger control strategies and simulations, modeled after law enforcement live simulation training technologies, to create an atmosphere of non-violence, self-discipline, and cooperative learning among the members of the Anger Control Counseling Group.

Report of Action Taken

The first step in the implementation process was to meet with the 15 students in the Anger Control counseling Group. The writer explained to the students that the school was testing Aikido instruction as a way to help students manage their behavior and to help them feel more confident when dealing with verbal or physical confrontations. Each of the students was very interested in participating but expressed a concern that such martial arts training might encourage even more fighting and violence. The group, however, was reassured that no kicking or punching was used in the Aikido martial arts system, which seemed to arouse even greater student curiosity. As a result, all 15 students signed up at the conclusion of the meeting and were accepted into the program contingent upon bringing in a signed parental permission sheet.

Next, the writer contacted each parent or guardian to explain the goals and objectives of the Aikido program. The parents, too, were concerned about possible incidents of fighting when they heard the term "martial arts." However, once they were informed about the non-violent intent of Aikido, they were extremely interested in having their children participate in the training program. Many parents stated that they wished more of such activities were available during and after regular school hours and would gladly support any program that would keep their children out of trouble. Consequently, all fifteen permission forms were returned with the proper signatures.

At this point, with the help of administrators and teachers, scheduling of Aikido classes was arranged to accommodate the students' academic and logistic requirements. The program sessions would take place two times per week, each session lasting for forty minutes. Coordination and flexibility among the teachers were essential since several students had to be pulled from their regular classroom periods. Nevertheless, the teachers were very supportive since these students often exhibited such violent and disruptive behaviors that they were unable to provide meaningful instruction with these students present in the room. Several teachers commented that if the program was able to help even one of the fifteen students improve his or her behavior, it would be worth the effort.

At this time past data regarding referrals for classroom disruption, verbal abuse, and physical assault among members of the Anger Control Counseling Group were gathered immediately prior to the first week of Aikido instruction. Next, the following list of items and materials was purchased: (1) 45 colored martial arts belts (15 white belts, 15 yellow belts, and 15 orange belts); (2) eight feet of foam pipe insulation to fashion soft, bendable training devices to safely simulate edged and impact weapons that might be present during a violent confrontation; and (3) certificates for each rank successfully earned by the participants. Since the school's budgetary resources were limited, the writer declined to purchase full martial arts uniforms since the classes could be held adequately in street clothes and socks.

Activity sessions were held using six to eight physical education department's folding attachable 5' X 10' wrestling mats set up on one half of the gymnasium floor, taking up an area of approximately 400 square feet. Care was taken to ensure maximum safety by enforcing strict rules of conduct on and off the mats. Each activity was led by the writer, a certified Aikido instructor, and assisted by at least one other adult clinical or special education staff member. All participants were instructed to abide by the following rules, typical of all traditional martial arts training programs: (1) no student is allowed on the mat area

without the presence and permission of the instructor; (2) students and instructors must bow before entering and leaving mat area as well as to another Aikidoist before and after any training interaction; (3) all participants must remove shoes and all jewelry, watches and/or accessories which could accidently cause injury to self or others, (4) no talking unless hand is raised and acknowledged by instructor(s); and (5) absolutely no horseplay or unauthorized practice or demonstration of techniques during or outside of Aikido class. Since this program required complete cooperation by participants in order to be implemented safely and successfully, any reprimands for safety violations were on a "one-warning" basis. If the student had to be reprimanded for a safety violation a second time, he or she would be asked to sit in the time-out area for the remainder of the class session.

During each week of the 12-week implementation period, instructional emphasis focused on peaceful conflict resolution, non-violent self-defense, individual and group confrontation management, and autogenic relaxation training strategies and techniques to help students safely and successfully de-escalate and ultimately resolve verbal and physical disputes. Students were given the opportunity to earn behavioral bonus points, colored belt ranks (white belt through orange belt) and certificates of completion. In each week of the implementation period, students were

videotaped during each program session to enhance accuracy of behavioral data recording procedures. The tape was later replayed to reveal the types and number of disruptive and/or assaultive behaviors exhibited by students during each Aikido class session.

Month 1, Week 1:

Students were taught the philosophy and history of Aikido (mutual cooperation, respect for all life, and non-violence) and demonstrated proper rules of class conduct, mat safety, and warm-up exercises and procedures introduced as a tool for meditative relaxation. Basic concepts of balance and off-balancing techniques (kuzushi) were also introduced.

Month 1, Week 2:

Students were taught rear, front and side breakfalls and the "no, down, back" verbal and "rope-climb parry block" physical responses when facing an opponent who is starting a fight with them by pushing or punching. Deep breathing relaxation techniques were practiced during simulated verbal and physical confrontations.

Month 1, Week 3:

Students learned how to move their body to a position of <u>ma-ai</u>, a distance of 3-6 feet away from an agitated

individual standing near or entering their body space. This valuable technique, used by law enforcement professionals worldwide, was supplemented with self-talk and re-framing strategies, focusing on the philosophy of "my antagonist is weak and out of control; I am strong and in control."

Month 1, Week 4:

Students practiced Month 1 Aikido strategies and techniques in small groups and tested for the rank of white belt. Emphasis was placed on the formal traditional martial arts rank testing procedure in which all participants sit or kneel in seiza (formal sitting) posture while individuals and groups demonstrate and perform the required movements and techniques. All 15 students were successful in earning the rank of white belt.

Month 2, Week 1:

Students were taught how to perform soft blocking techniques against kicks or strikes. Emphasis on moving body out of the line of attack was encouraged. Students participated in a peer trust-building exercise in which students fell backwards into awaiting arms of other supportive group members.

Month 2, Week 2:

Students were taught how to perform simple release

moves from wrist grabs. Instruction focused on non-violent yet effective escape techniques that minimize the chance of injury to both recipient and antagonist. An authority trust-building exercise was also presented in which students were blindfolded and were required to navigate an indoor obstacle course of cones and mats solely by the verbal instructions of other students and staff members.

Month 2, Week 3:

Students were taught proper randori (free play or practice) techniques, emphasizing friendly competition between tori (person performing the throw/technique) and uke (person receiving the force of the throw/technique). Additional instruction was given in yellow belt testing procedures and channeling pre-competition anxiety into useful energy through breathing and "tension-relaxation" exercises.

Month 2, Week 4:

Students rehearsed month 1 and month 2 Aikido strategies and techniques and then tested for the rank of yellow belt. Emphasis was placed upon safe application of self-defense techniques during randori competition and mutual respect for tori and uke. All 15 students were successful in earning the rank of yellow belt.

Month 3, Week 1:

Students were taught a variety of release moves from a front and rear choke position. Emphasis was placed on the protection of one's windpipe and trachea, maintaining airflow through the breathing airway and lowering one's center of gravity when performing escapes from chokes. Visualization was taught in the context of mentally picturing the steps of the escape technique prior to its physical execution.

Month 3, Week 2:

Students were taught appropriate and effective self-defense techniques when facing multiple antagonists or assailants. Instruction focused on "X-movements" (angular forward and rearward steps which resemble the letter x and are used to evade a series of punches, kicks or stabs) and side-to-side avoidance techniques during dynamic armed and unarmed attack scenarios. Cooperation and peacemaking concepts of Aikido were re-introduced to students.

Month 3, Week 3:

Students learned wrist compliance techniques to be used when grabbed or pushed. Minimum use of force and establishing rapport with an antagonist when possible was emphasized. Students also reviewed concepts and techniques for upcoming orange belt test.

Month 3, Week 4:

Students tested for orange belt. Special guest mentors from the community (nationally-ranked 5th degree Black Belt in Judo and Aikido and FBI/DEA-trained police defensive tactics training coordinator) were invited to assist with testing ceremonies and awards presentations. All 15 participants successfully met the requirements for the rank of orange belt. Evaluative data was then collected and compiled in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Aikido-based school violence prevention program.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Before the onset of this practicum, there had been an increase in disruptive and assaultive behaviors among the severely emotionally disturbed middle and high school students towards other students and staff members at the work site. In order to solve this problem, the writer chose to implement a video-enhanced Aikido-based school violence prevention training program that combined the effective elements of non-violent martial arts training, crisis intervention, conflict resolution, physical fitness activity and autogenic relaxation, all integral components of traditional Aikido instruction. This program was designed to help students in the Anger Control Counseling Group reduce disruptive and assaultive behaviors while helping these students more effectively manage their own violent behaviors through a variety of verbal and physical conflict management coping strategies.

At the end of the 12-week implementation period, the writer compiled the data to determine whether or not the anticipated outcomes took place. The results are as follows:

Table 1

■ Group Met Practicum Behavior Standard

[ ] Group Did Not Meet Practicum Behavior Standard

12-WEEK BEHAVIORAL SUMMARY CHART
Number of Anger Control Counseling Group Students Refraining from Disruptive & Assaultive Behaviors

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12-Week Total	12-Week Average
Classroom Disruptions	15	15	15	13	15	13	15	15	15	12	14	15	8 CD	14.33 ■
Verbal Abuse of Student	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	13	15	15	15	2 VAS	14.83 ■
Verbal Abuse of Teacher	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	0 VAT	15.00 ■
Physical Confrontation with Student	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	0 PCS	15.00 ■
Physical Confrontation with Teacher	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	0 PCT	15.00 ■
Number of ACCG Students Exhibiting a Reduction in Number of School-Wide Disciplinary Referrals for Violent Behavior Since Pre-implementation Referral Tabulation	4	5	4	6	7	7	8	10	11	10	9	10		At Completion Date 10 ■

(1) The first expected outcome of this practicum anticipated that an average of 11 out of 15 students would refrain from disruptive classroom behaviors during the twelve weeks of Aikido sessions. This outcome was met. An average of 14.33 out of 15 students refrained from disruptive classroom behaviors during the implementation period.

(2) The second expected outcome of this practicum anticipated that an average of 12 out of 15 students would refrain from verbally abusive behaviors towards students or staff members during the twelve weeks of Aikido sessions. This outcome was met. An average of 14.83 out of 15 students refrained from verbally abusive behaviors during the implementation period.

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(3) The third expected outcome of this practicum anticipated that an average of 13 out of 15 students would refrain from physically assaultive behaviors towards students or staff members during the twelve weeks of Aikido sessions. This outcome was met. An average of 15 out of 15 students refrained from physically assaultive behaviors during the implementation period.

(4) The forth expected outcome of this practicum anticipated that 8 out of 15 students would exhibit a reduction in school-wide disciplinary referrals for violent behavior at the completion of the twelve weeks of Aikido sessions. This outcome was met. 10 of the 15 students exhibited a reduction in school-wide disciplinary referrals for violent behavior at the completion of the implementation period.

Discussion

At the onset of this practicum, many students, staff members and parents were apprehensive about providing Aikido instruction to a group of students with an extensive history of and a strong propensity for violent behavior. However, once the program was implemented, it was clear to members within and outside of the school community that Aikido instruction was having a positive impact on the lives of the program participants.

One of the most dramatic changes in the students was the enhanced respect reported by the classroom teachers and

administrators. The students seemed to be able to carry feelings of respect for authority learned in the Aikido classes into their regular academic settings. Staff reported greater cooperation and compliance for rules and less aggressive responses to class conflicts initiated by other non-participating classmates and peers. In fact, many of these students actually taught violence de-escalation strategies to other students, encouraging them to "let it go...it's not worth it...you don't need to fight...attack the problem and not the person."

Additionally, staff perceived a marked improvement in the self-esteem of the Aikido program participants, especially during days when class was in session. Rather than boasting about their newly-learned self-defense techniques, the students exuded a quiet confidence, choosing not to discuss very much about the classes with others. In fact, when questioned about their training, the participating students would often simply state, "we're learning a non-violent form of self-defense; you should definitely check it out."

Also, the program participants were able to demonstrate a remarkable degree of focus and concentration during the classes, considering that most of these students were diagnosed by psychologists and physicians as suffering from attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity. The students were able to tune out a variety of distractions taking place

in the gym while Aikido classes were in session, such as one-on-one basketball games and loud, distracting verbal arguments among other students wandering into the area from other locations. In fact, the few incidents of violent behavior recorded during the practicum were verbal outbursts due to student frustration with the inability to effectively hear the Aikido instructor's directions within the sometimes chaotic gym environment.

Additionally, the participating students themselves noted a marked improvement in their ability to control their anger and anxiety during stressful situations. One student reported that his Aikido training helped him keep calm during a violent neighborhood dispute and evade an attempted knife attack. He was able to escape from the area and call for police assistance.

Moreover, the parents of the participants reported numerous benefits, including increased respect for parental authority and other family members, respect for rules of the house, and an overall improvement in self-confidence. Many of the parents stated to the school administration that they wanted their children to continue with the Aikido training and were impressed with its effects on their children's home and community behavior.

Finally, one of the most significant aspects of the Aikido training was the respect for the diversity and uniqueness of other human beings. During class sessions in

which some students were unable to perform a technique the first time through, students who were proficient made a special effort to mentor and guide them, exhibiting a remarkable degree of patience and maturity. When a student performed a series of complex movements in an awkward manner, evidence of the unfortunately typical adolescent behavior of laughter and ridicule was non-existent, instead replaced by an enduring climate of encouragement, solidarity and genuine concern and respect for the success of each member of the Aikido group.

On the whole, the practicum outcomes were consistent with the research findings of those in the literature. The combination of the effective elements of non-violent traditional martial arts training, crisis intervention, conflict resolution, physical fitness activity, and autogenic relaxation proved successful in reducing disruptive and assaultive behaviors among the Anger Control Counseling Group students at the work site. Thus, it is possible that similar Aikido-based programs might be effective in reducing violent in-school behaviors in other educational and therapeutic settings.

Recommendations

(1) Aikido classes would be a safe, effective and inexpensive adjunct activity for any physical education or counseling group in both regular and special education settings.

(2) Police officers with Aikido training could help spread the philosophy of non-violence through school and community-based classes to enhance trust, respect and bonding between law enforcement agencies and adolescents, which could serve to reduce juvenile crime and gang activity.

(3) Parents could benefit from the stress management aspects of Aikido since Aikido training is appropriate for all age groups and ability levels.

(4) All Aikido programs are more effective if they take place in a distraction-free environment. Any audience members present should observe rules of absolute silence.

(5) Aikido instructors selected to serve in alternative educational or therapeutic settings should be carefully chosen for their ability to interact with people in a dynamic, positive and motivational manner. In addition, care must be taken to develop activities and teach techniques that are appropriate for the particular student population to avoid injury and accidental/intentional infliction of bodily harm.

Dissemination

This practicum has been discussed with members of the work site as well as with numerous educational and therapeutic agencies nationwide and a copy will be sent to each. Additionally, this practicum will be shared with law enforcement professionals during upcoming national police

conferences hosted by police chiefs seeking alternative violence de-escalation modalities.

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APPENDIX

12-WEEK BEHAVIORAL SUMMARY CHART

■ Group Met Practicum Behavior Standard

[X] Group Did Not Meet Practicum Behavior Standard

12-WEEK BEHAVIORAL SUMMARY CHART
Number of Anger Control Counseling Group Students Refraining from Disruptive & Assaultive Behaviors

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12-Week Total	12-Week Average
Classroom Disruptions														☐
Verbal Abuse of Student														☐
Verbal Abuse of Teacher														☐
Physical Confrontation with Student														☐
Physical Confrontation with Teacher														☐
Number of ACCG Students Exhibiting a Reduction in Number of School-Wide Disciplinary Referrals for Violent Behavior Since Pre-Implementation Referral Tabulation													[redacted]	At Completion Date ☐

Findings & Results:

Unanticipated Outcomes: